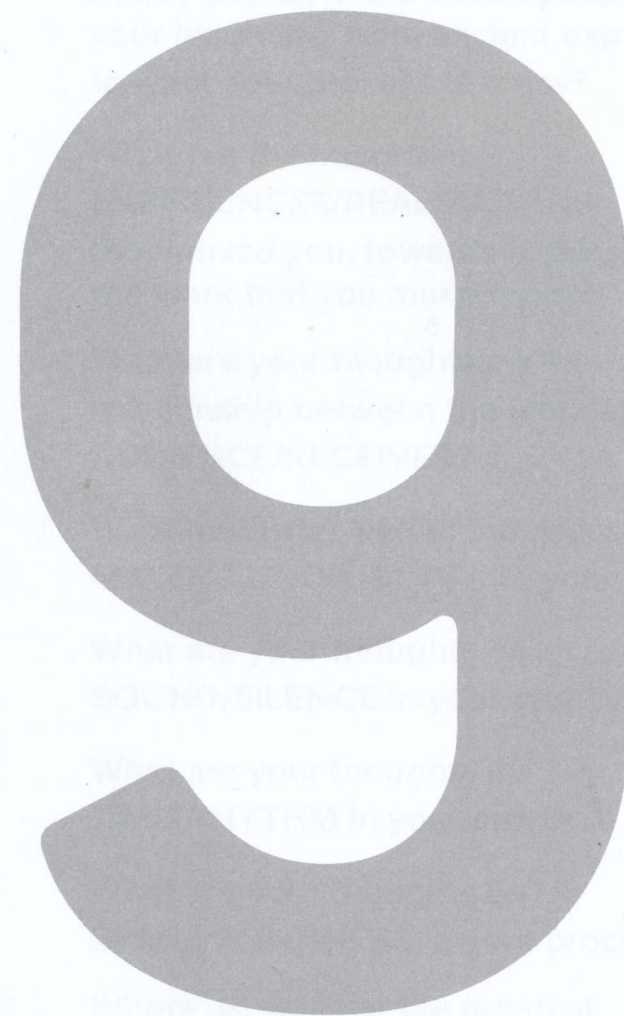


9

QUESTIONS



QUESTIONS

An artist project by Gustaf Broms

- 1** In terms of **LINEAGE**, what do you see as key points, in the development of your language, from ancient expression to what your process is today?
- 2** What are the important **EXPERIENCES/REALIZATIONS** that moved you, towards making the work that you make today?
- 3** What are your thoughts on the relationship between the work and **AUDIENCE/RECEIVER**?
- 4** What motivates you to introduce **MATERIALS/OBJECTS** into your work?
- 5** What are your thoughts on **SOUND/SILENCE** in your process?
- 6** What are your thoughts on **TIME/RHYTHM** in your process?
- 7** What are your thoughts on **SPACE/EMPTINESS** in your process?
- 8** Where do you see the greatest **CHALLENGES** in your future process?
- 9** If you had to use **WORDS** to describe what you do, what would those words be?
- 9b** What is the **QUESTION** I fail to ask?

7 Foreword: Forward but not first by Shannon Cochrane

8	Adina Bar-On	40	Linda Mary Montano
10	Alastair MacLennan	40	Macarena Perich Rosas
11	Andrea Saemann	42	Margaret Dragu
12	Antoni Karwowski	44	Mariel Carranza
12	Arahmaiani	45	Marilyn Arsem
13	Artur Tajber	45	Martha Wilson
14	Barbara T. Smith	46	Monika Günther & Ruedi Schill
15	Bartolomé Ferrando	47	Myriam Laplante
16	Boris Nieslony	47	Nigel Rolfe
18	Brian Connolly	49	Nobuo Kubota
20	Dorothea Rust	51	Paul Couillard
23	Elvira Santamaria-Torres	54	Pekka Kainulainen
25	Esther Ferrer	57	Rocio Boliver
26	Fausto Grossi	58	Roi Vaara
27	Guadalupe Neves	60	Ron Athey
28	Guillermo Gómez-Peña	61	Serge Olivier Fokoua
30	Gustaf Broms	61	Shannon Cochrane
31	He Yunchang	64	Stelarc
32	hermann nitsch	66	Tanya Mars
32	Irma Optimist	68	Tehching Hsieh
33	Jamie McMurry	69	Tomas Ruller
35	Jill Orr	70	Ulay
37	Johanna Householder	70	Valentín Torrens
38	John Duncan	72	Zbigniew Warpechowski
39	Kurt Johannessen	73	Zhu Ming
39	Leif Elggren		

75 Afterword: Afterward but not last by Gustaf Broms

77 Contributors

82 Image Credits

Forward but not first

Shannon Cochrane

In 2014 Gustaf Broms composed a list of nine questions (actually, there are ten questions; the final one intending to be a catch-all but more often than not being one of the most difficult to answer) and started to circulate them to fellow performance artists, many he had a personal connection with and many more he had never even met. The initial impulse to gather this collection arose from a conversation Broms had had with another artist and for more than a year, he collected the responses that came back to him without even considering how, or imagining that, a project—certainly not a book—might manifest.

So, I'm trying to remember how all this started and how FADO Performance Art Centre became involved. When did the nine questions shift from being the language "material" that Gustaf and I relish as workaday conversation—similar to any gathering of performance artists sitting across from each other at all the tables, at all the festivals and meetings, in all the bars after every performance, on all the walks home and immediately after first introductions are dispensed with—into something more? This is the same conversation we have been having since the day we met, and Gustaf has brought it forward, again, for us, in a new form. The hope is that when you read 9Questions, you will recognize it as more than just familiar, it's family. These are the bricks and mortar of our processes, our performances, our practices: material/object, audience/receiver, sound/silence, time/rhythm, space/emptiness. Someone asks, then someone answers and we find ourselves at home, describing the corners of each room in close detail, and talking about the spaces where lineage, experience and, ultimately, language, sit.

Over the last year, and in earnest for the last six months as we pressed on, the roster of contributors to 9Questions continued to grow as Gustaf and I intuitively followed the family tree, climbing from one branch to the next. At some point, practicality demanded that we stop adding names to the list in order to arrive at what you are now holding in your hands. The book form might be static (it has purpose but is not precious, or perfect) but the 9Questions conversation is never really finished. We continue each time we meet.

But what makes this collection first and foremost an artist project is that the questions are asked from the specific perspective of Broms' deep personal understanding that, as a practice, performance resides at the permeable border between the conscious and subconscious, and the meeting of the concrete world of form and the spiritual realm. For Broms, these are the essential questions—the desert island questions—and in that sense, are meant to elicit reactions that are fixed and ephemeral, illusive and solid, at the same time. There are as many overlapping ideas and connections as there are not; the responses are as diverse and wide-ranging as the artists and their own approaches, from the practical to the abstract to the simply far-flung. Despite this, we can spot them—the shared signposts—everywhere throughout all the texts, revealing the path already taken and mapping our forward direction.

In the language of PERFORMANCE ART, every outline of a global image is a design, an identity and, possibly, simultaneously its rejection: The performance is in a period of time that is called "now," a complex play of the interaction of very different media. The interested members of the audience can, seen in a direct manner, participate in the design of a global image, an idea, its education and its rejection. This is fundamentally different in every performance that has to do with the nature of global images. They can be similar but they are unique for every person and, here, once more, another factor of PERFORMANCE ART comes into play. It has the character of a language and eludes a quick development of style by means of its liveliness.

From the 1960's onwards the relation actor-observer had the characteristic of a workshop of artistic-social research for the performance artist. In their experiments the performers did not test art historical issues, but rather systems of politically relevant behaviour and social action—which is why the performance was ideal as the tip of a lance, and was "applied" to feminism, transverse and gender developments, and the development of "Cultural Studies" and popular cultures. One can say that there almost was an epistemology of the experiment; at any rate the reports from performance festivals grazed in these rich fields. A shining hope, the figure of the observer as an aura of living transformation.

By comparison I see a drought nowadays.

4 To be material and object for any other material and objects in this world.

5-7 To be sound/silence/time/rhythm/space/emptiness for them.

8 How to shape my vanishing; how to shape my death.

9 How to shape my koan, a daily life plot.

9B Describe the performance in which you could venture the farthest into unknown areas of objects and emotions.



Brian Connolly

1-2 I encountered Mummers when I was a small child. These alternative beings arrived in our home at Christmas time. They were all dressed up in costumes and their identities were concealed. Their interruption into the ordinary domestic situation was very shocking, even disturbing and very memorable. In my local area the Mummers had a kind of "dramatic act" which links to older, probably pagan, mystery plays, in which a character is killed and brought back to life through mysterious surreal actions. The Mummers came into the heart of my home; they were hidden strangers, tricksters, actors, comedians, surreal clowns etc. Their influence stayed with me hidden for many years, as a kind of alternative way of being and reflecting life's bigger mysteries.

I am from a rural background. I was brought up on a farm. My understanding of life was/is linked closely with my observations and understanding of natural processes, cycles, details. Having had a lot of time within nature, often alone, I developed a deep way of seeing and an awareness of processes, how things work. I was also a bit dyslexic, I could not read very well and still remember the moment of realization when the mysterious ciphers on a page actually described something in real life. Text had remained an abstract code like mathematics until I was older than other children. I had learned about the world directly, through

observation and through looking at imagery in books. (This was before TV!) This led me towards art and I was drawing from an early age. (The rest is history.)

At art college I was introduced to performance art via Alastair MacLennan. I came across Alastair in a corridor one day. He was sitting on a chair in a line of chairs and had arranged them like one would see on a bus. His head was covered—he was like an object, yet alive. Coming across him in this way gave me the same sort of visual shock as the Mummers had in my childhood. Over the next few years, I was able to see a number of his live works in different situations and the live/object aspect of performance stuck with me for a long time before I got the courage to try performance art myself. My own work at this time (late 1980's) was more material bound, requiring long, often site-specific construction methods. I was making large-scale, delicate plaster objects/installations within galleries or museums in exhibitions that were open to the public. I was in effect working in public view, sometimes for several weeks at a time and often talking to audience about the work, etc. and through this I became more aware of alternative roles that an artist could have in public. This led me to consider how the creative process could be interpreted by an audience in time and over time. This led directly to my testing of performance art practices or methods (early 1990's) and eventually to a series of durational "Install-Actions."

In looking at lineage, in terms of art history or performance art history, I believe that much of my formative experience came about in relation to Alastair MacLennan's practice. I was very aware of his durational "Actions" and saw a lot of his works in public contexts in various countries. I was influenced by this and some of my early works were site-specific, durational and ritualistic in form. Considering a broader art history, I am influenced in various ways by many artists, such as the Fluxus artists, Beuys, Magritte, Escher, Viola, etc.

3 Much of my performance strategies relate to specific contexts, places or situations. Some of my performances are therefore designed specifically as "relational" (in art historical

terms), relying on a public interaction to work. For example, in my Market Stall Performances, it is important that the public encounter the work as part of the market context and not as art, as they have to grapple with the nature of what I am doing rather than simply accepting it as some kind of artwork/performance. At first glance they see me simply as another trader, trying to sell my wares; but my wares are not that ordinary, nor simple. It is the nature of my wares that creates the dislocation and dialogue. The items that I try either to sell, or develop transactions with, are often surreal or political props, and these I have designed to provoke thought, discourse and sometimes—actual trade. The audiences are ordinary shoppers, out to find their daily bargains and to obtain goods to sustain them. They are actively engaged in looking. They do not expect to find someone like me there. I am a stranger in their market. I am also a stranger to other market stall-holders. Some do not see me at all, they pass by to go to the vegetables beside me. Others stop to consider what I am selling, and in not finding immediate answers choose to pass on. Others engage with me about what I am doing. If an individual is open, or has some time to spare, it is they who engage most and receive the richer experience as a result.

In other works such as Install-Actions, the audience is more often within the space of the artwork as it evolves. They are free to move around me and consider what I am doing. I work in silence, slowly and with focus. I may be working in a space for hours or even several days. Occasionally members of the audience speak to me, sometimes I answer, but not always. In this kind of work I aim to create a rich spatial experience for the audience. There can be moments of tension as the work evolves. If they spend a little time with me, they may see that aspects of the work are repetitive. They can then see how the work has evolved and may potentially evolve. In this way they can start to understand my methods and find meaning in my actions. They may come back several times to see how the work and space has evolved and changed. In this work I consider the audience more as a spectator, as I am less involved with them. I remain impassive and in some sense it does not matter if anyone is

there to see the work or not. Although this would be disappointing for me, the work would still occur without an audience.

4 There are many ways in which objects are introduced into my working strategies. Each performance strategy has a different relationship with materials, processes or objects. Sometimes when thinking through a project or potential working strategy, an idea comes. Sometimes while looking at things, sometimes while working with things, etc.

5 Sound can be difficult for me as I mainly focus on the visual aspects of the work. I often choose to work in silence and the only sounds are from materials or objects I am using. The work processes may be very focused, sometimes detailed, and silence does accentuate this aspect of the work. In recent Bbeyond group performances, I have used sounds more easily, be these with other objects, or my own voice, or in relation to other sounds.

6 Time and rhythm are often important in the Install-Action works, as some repetitive elements are/may be employed. In these, I often work slowly with care and attention. Duration is often an issue, after six or eight hours or more, one gets tired and focus can vary. In relation to Market Stall Performances, time and rhythm are less focused, as much depends on the interaction with audience since they dictate how things evolve over time.

7 Space or emptiness may refer to cosmic space here? Or does the question refer more to temporal specific space(s)? If referring to the wider cosmic space then this may enter aspects of my Install-Action works indirectly, where scale can be open and there may be references to gravity. In relation to temporal spaces or actual spaces, then I have used the darkness of specific spaces to emphasize scale and emptiness. Darkness increases the scale of an enclosed space. Silence can also further emphasize the nature of space, emptiness and scale.

8 Distraction from other work/life commitments; lack of focused time to enable

development of ideas; lack of opportunities to test new work or working ideas in a focused way; difficulty in making some more demanding works due to age; lack of opportunity to make work etc.

9 Attempts to communicate (sometimes) complex ideas through materials, processes and using the body as an activator, facilitator or mediator in time. My aim is to create an engaging aesthetic visual process, or provoke thought and meaning within actions. In certain works I try to engage the audience directly through humour, hopefully to provoke deeper consideration of issues, ideas and concerns. I try to be real. I try to provoke thought, or communicate political feelings on issues of concern to me.

9B Why do you like performance art practice or why do you consider it to be an important form of art practice?



Dorothea Rust

1 At the base of my practical understanding of Performance\Art is the linkage of body and space, and interest in different movement practices, which might be rooted (since my childhood) in the primordial and unbound (personal) need to move.

Absorbed practices and experiences in: rhythmic gymnastics; Ausdruckstanz (German

expressive dance) especially Laban's kinetic movement concept related to space; ballet, modern dance and postmodern dance—the latter is not a style but a movement reflecting the notion towards movement (and) art production—here women dancers and choreographers such as Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown and others were instrumental, initiating collaborations between the arts and bringing (again as earlier in the Dada movement) instability through movement to the visual arts; somatic movement and body practices (such as Taiji, Qi-Gong, Eutony, the Alexander Technique, the Feldenkrais method, Body-Mind-Centering®, Releasing Techniques, Yoga and more); the “learning by doing” years in New York in the 1980's and cultural immersion into this melting pot of the arts and of people from all over the world, imbibing all sorts of workshops, dance classes, performances in lofts and in in- and off-spaces, framed by the collaborations with dancers, choreographers and musicians, when the experimental spirit of the Judson Dance Group of the 1960's was still vivid; also touring and teaching in Switzerland and Europe in the early 1990's as a dance performer, working in collaboration with musicians with a radical approach to improvisation. All these experiences have influenced my work to this day. Later, the studies in visual arts and cultural and gender studies helped me to reflect the cultural impetus and impact of these specific dance-movement-body and art practices, understanding that they had developed over time out of reform movements at the turn of the 19th/20th century in the aftermath of industrialization and the first and second world wars. These times were subjected to radical social, economical, political and cultural changes. Maybe one could see some linkage from these times to today, as all societies and the globe are facing nowadays (again, in a different way) radical cultural-socio-geo-political changes.

2 “Learning by doing” and thus developing a dance and performance/art practice, being performative, on the road, over thirty years: in diverse collaborations and workshops, meeting and networking with artists, students, activists and other people in art-related events through

the situation of performative practice in different cultural fields and regions of the (e.g. India). I suppose today I am sort of a hidden activist in the sense that I see my performative practice linked to a wide range of activities: I network, collaborate and organize with others (reflective) performative events in local and trans-local nexuses.

My practice encompasses: On subtle I have an awareness for moving bodies related to space: What we call body can be a common nominator for human-animals and other animal-and vegetative-bodies and things. They share precariousness and vulnerability. Bodies can go astray and constantly undergo transformation, letting us experience that bodies can never be entirely possessed and are divided, that they can connect with many and other bodies and body-states. I understand bodies as intertwined with space and context. A somatic approach to my work underlines the notion that we perceive (unconsciously) through movement and that bodies respond to others also through movement in micro to physical and spatial ways.

On a cultural-social level and related to the arts field: I started to change the spelling Performance (and) Art adopting the spelling “Performance\Art” from Sabine Gebhardt (professor for contemporary art and director of Master of Arts in Fine Arts, Art in Public Space & Art Teaching at HSLU Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts). This spelling was offered in response to my notion of Performance (and) Art as a wide range of performative practices perceived and reflected in contextualized ways including queer-feminist awareness and reflection towards the socio-political implications and repercussions of our times. Performance reflected out of practice traverses genres and disciplines. It intervenes and stirs up, mediates, conveys, imparts and communicates within the context of a specific field, place and environment. Performance not only as an aesthetic artwork but also as a cultural practice.

3 I see performance as a situation rather than as a(n) (piece of) artwork. Performance generates an open and common space, a situation which can activate hidden and multi-layered aspects of memories in a place

Adina Bar-On
About Love, 2013
Photo: Shira Halfon

Alastair MacLennan
BUST AS DUST, Salt Lake City
Performance Art Festival, USA, 2017
Photo: Winston Inoway

Andrea Saemann
2013
Photo: Cornelia Cottati

Antoni Karwowski
2014
Photo: Elizabeth Karwowska

Arahmaiani
1996–1997
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Artur Tajber
TIMEMIT, Kiasma Theatre, Helsinki,
Finland, 2012
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Barbara T. Smith
Nude Frieze, 1972
Photo: Boris Sojka

Bartolomé Ferrando
Decadence Festival, Spain, 2015
Photo: Imke Zeinstra

Boris Nieslony
Koan, daily life plot, 2018
Photo: Frank Homeyer

Brian Connolly
Raking History Performance, Future
Histories, Kilmainham Jail, Ireland,
2016
Photo: Joseph Carr

Dorothea Rust
*IF THERE IS A HEAVEN ON EARTH
IT IS*, 2018
Photo: Deneth Piumakshi
Wedaarachchige

Elvira Santamaria-Torres
Parable VII–II: Water processes,
Colombia, 2016
Photo: Tzizi Barrantes

Esther Ferrer
Street actions, Almeria, Spain
Photo: Pelo

Fausto Grossi
Viajando Copia
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Guadalupe Neves
Photo: Candela Lucas Neves

Guillermo Gómez-Peña
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Gustaf Broms
2017
Photo: Malou Bergman

He Yunchang
One Metre of Democracy, 2010
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

hermann nitsch
Orgien Mysterien Theater,
150th Action, Tasmania, 2017
Photo: Rene Rietmeyer

Irma Optimist
Photo: Jerzy Bartkowski

Jamie McMurtry
Gravy Train, Live Action, Göteborg,
Sweden, 2018
Photo: Ignacio Pérez Pérez

Jill Orr
Antipodean Epic-Interloper, 2016
Photo: Christina Simons for Jill Orr

Johanna Householder
Waiting for the Chthulucene, VIVA!
Art Action, Montréal, Canada, 2017
Photo: Guy L'Heureux

John Duncan
2013
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Kurt Johannessen
Photo: Petter Lønningen

Leif Elggren
Photo: Susanna Bolle

Linda Mary Montano
Chicken Linda
Photo: Jennifer Zachin

Macarena Perich Rosa
lo que somos, VIVA! Art Action,
Montréal, Canada, 2013
Photo: Guy L'Heureux

Margaret Dragu
Photo: Alisha Weng

Mariel Carranza
Encounter #37, Human Resources,
Los Angeles, USA, 2017
Photo: Svetlana Darsalia

Marilyn Arsem
Adrift, First Biennial Festival of
Performance Art and Sound Art,
The Quarry at Contemporary Arts
International, USA, 2013
Photo: Chelsea Coon

Martha Wilson
Thump
Photo and compositing: Kathy
Grove Courtesy of the artist and
PPOW Gallery, New York, USA

Monika Günther and Ruedi Schill
KORMORAN, Kunstmuseum Luzern,
Switzerland, 2015
Photo: Priska Ketterer

Myriam Laplante
Sad Sort
Photo: Roberto Vaccai

Nigel Rolfe
Paradise Unfolding
Photo: HJ Morrison

Nobuo Kubota
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Paul Couillard
Fixed Signal, Independencedo
Festival Internacional de Performance,
Dominican Republic, 2012
Photo: John Oughton

Pekka Kainulainen
2018
Photo: Tomi Joutsen

Rocio Boliver
Between Menopause and Old Age,
Ex Teresa Arte Actual Museum, 2012
Photo: Oliver Ludwig / Centro de
Documentación Ex Teresa
Arte Actual

Roi Vaara
Skiing, Arctic Action, Svalbard,
Norway, 2017
Photo: Sarah Gerats

Ron Athey
Self Obliterations, Slovenia
Photo: Mia Fras

Serge Olivier Fokuoa
À l'étouffé, Rencontre
interuniversitaire de performance
actuelle, 2016
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Shannon Cochrane
Performance for Triple Decker
(*English solo*), Live Action,
Göteborg, Sweden, 2014
Photo: Liu Wei

Stelarc
Propel, Body on Robot Arm,
DeMonstrable - Autronics, Lawrence
Wilson Gallery, Perth, Australia,
2017
Photo: Steven Aaron Hughes

Tanya Mars
CRONE, MONOMYTHS, FADO
Performance Art Centre, Toronto,
Canada, 2017
Photo: Henry Chan

Tehching Hsieh
One Year Performance, New York,
1980–1981
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Tomas Ruller
NO MAD / KINS WAY TO THE STAR,
Prague,
Czech Republic, 2014
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Ulay
Auto-polaroid, Holland, Amsterdam,
1972
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Valentin Torrens
Festival Intramurs, Valencia,
2016
Photo: Unknown

Zbigniew Warpechowski
Dead of poetry, Gallery Zder
Krakow, Poland, 1992
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Zhu Ming
July 26 2002 No: A, Laoshan
Shandong, China, 2002
Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Editors' Note

The original texts contained within were written in several languages, across a range of styles and with different intentions. We have tried our best to shape them without flattening or altering the original voice. We have—in most cases (we think)—changed the spellings to be consistent with Canadian usage. You will find a lot of “quotation marks,” Capitalizations and *emphasis*, that, if you were the editor... Sometimes we checked with the authors and other times we used our best judgement. There might be a . out of place. This is an artist project and a labour of love. In that spirit, we have embraced variations and inconsistencies.



9Questions

An artist project by Gustaf Broms

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Published by FADO Performance Art Centre and Centre for Orgchaosmik Studies
Supported by Stiftelsen Långmanska kulturfonden

www.orgchaosmik.org
www.performanceart.ca

Edited by Gustaf Broms and Shannon Cochrane
Design by Lisa Kiss Design, Toronto

FADO Performance Art Centre acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts,
Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, and the Department of Canadian Heritage.



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ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



TORONTO
ARTS
COUNCIL

FUNDED BY
THE CITY OF
TORONTO

ISBN

Canada: 978-0-9730883-4-2

Sweden: 978-91-639-8460-0

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